لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله

إن الدين عند الله الإسلام

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THE REVIEW OF RELIGIONS

July 1966

EDITORS

S. D. AHMAD M. G. AHMAD

THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM

The Promised Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was born in 1835 in Qadian, a village in India. In the eighties of the 19th century, he was called to the office of world Reformer to combat the current of anti-religious philosophies and to explode the Christian theory of redemption based on the fiction of Christ's death on the Cross and to tell the Christians and Muslims to call off their hope for a second visit from Christ as he had been gathered to his forefathers and barred like all mortals from coming back to the world ; and that he, the Promised Messiah, had come instead.

The Promised Messiah initiated the Ahmadiyya Movement (1) to revive Faith in God, challenging rival churches to a spiritual contest to seek Divine sanction for the religion He favoured, through prayer and appeal to Him for guidance and arbitration in the matter, by means of His signs (2) to re-establish the glory of the Holy Prophet Muhammad and to expound and disseminate spiritual beauties and moral excellencies of the teachings of the HolyQuran(3) to wean men from war-like tendencies and to educate world opinion in favour of renunciation of war as a means of settling disputes (4) to infuse hope, faith and courage in the drooping hearts of Muslims and all the depressed races and nations of the world (5) to warn the exploiters, slave-drivers, and pedlars in sin against the evil consequences of their evil ways (6) to collect under one banner all the true followers of Islam and lovers of peace and (7) to inculcate among them the spirit of tolerance, goodwill and self-less fellow-service and a feeling of true brotherhood.

The Promised Messiah passed away in 1908 and was succeeded by his foremost votary and closest companion Hazrat Haji Hakim Maulvi Nooruddin as Khalifatul Masih I. After his death in 1914, the Promised Son of the Promised Messiah, Hazrat Haji Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmud Ahmad was chosen as the Khalifatul Masih II. During his 52 years of Imamat the Khalifatul Masih II organized a world-girdling chain of mosques and missions. On his death on November 8, 1965, the electoral college named with one accord Hafiz Mirza Nasir Ahmad, the late Khalifatul Masih's son and the Promised Messiah's grandson, the Khalifatul Masih III.

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For further information about the Movement, its activities and aims and objectives or literature, enquiries may be addressed to the nearest Ahmadiyya Mission or direct to

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It is open to all for discussing problems connected with the religious and spiritual growth of man, but it does not give any assurance to publish all articles, nor does it accept any responsibility for views expressed by contributors.

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نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

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Civilisation at the Cross Roads

Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan

The end of the Second World War in Europe and Asia did not bring peace or establish security. In fact, the very means through which the surrender of Japan was enforced has since filled the hearts of men with new fears and fresh anxieties. Nothing that has happened during the intervening period has served to allay these fears and to set these anxieties at rest. Developments during this period have only enhanced and intensified them.

The other day, a leading newspaper posed the question:

"Will the atom prove to be a servant of man or his killer"?

Perhaps the problem could be viewed in better perspective if the question asked were: "Will man prove himself master of the atom or perish as its victim"?

The choice lies with man, not with the atom. The atom

is only an instrument: a servant. Will man employ it for the promotion of human welfare or for his own destruction?

What invests this problem with the gravest solemnity is, of course, its stupendous potentialities in either direction. Never before has man had placed at his disposal resources so vast, capable of being harnessed to such varied uses in so many fields of human endeavour.

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Mankind stands at the threshold of a new era; it is witnessing the inauguration of a new epoch. Of all the manifold and almost limitless possibilities of progress, of beneficence, of the promotion of human welfare, of the alleviation of pain, in short, of the enrichment of life on earth, that are opening out before us we can to-day form but a vague concept. The prospect should, however, inspire us with hope and fill our hearts with eagerness to scale new heights, to penetrate fresh mysteries, to master new secrets, to harness an ever multiplying volume of forces and powers to the service of man. Our dominant feeling should be of joy and jubilation. On the contrary, as I have said, it is one of fear and anxiety, amounting sometimes to terror. It is strange and bewildering that this should be so.

Every increase of knowledge, every accession of human capacity, constitutes a widening of horizons, a broadening of the fields of endeavour and achievement. It is a Divine bounty; it is a mark of Divine approval of man's increasing exercise of the talents bestowed upon him by his Maker. It should foster human happiness; be a perpetual source of joy.

Then why is it that recent revolutionary advances in certain domains of science and technology have incited and augmented fear and anxiety and intensified a sense of doom, rather than stimulated an upsurge of happiness derived from a sense of achievement, an anticipation of much higher standards of human welfare?

Is it because the scientific revolution has outpaced man's slow advance in other domains? Is it because a rift has

appeared between man's rapidly increasing capacity and power for good or ill, on the one hand, and his standards of good and evil and his capacity for fostering good and restraining evil, on the other? May it not be that the spectacle of this ever—widening rift and the contemplation of the awful catastrophe that must overtake mankind if this rift should become unbridgeable are the true causes of our fear and anxiety?

If this is so, should not our effort be directed towards searching for the means of integration between all aspects of human life, so that life should become a coordinated whole or unity, and cease to be at conflict with itself?

Human society, starting with the family, has progressed through the tribe to the nation and is now seeking to take on an international character. In the course of this process, various sections have had to contend with many difficulties. The struggle has left troublesome legacies, which are still awaiting settlement and adjustment. In many spheres even our most advanced thinking, however, still falls short of that which has been made imperative by the scientific revolution. In most respects our thinking is still national or, at the most, continental. It is not yet truly international or global, though even that would not be adequate to the needs of to-day.

Our first need is that our thinking must transcend all intervening limitations and barriers and should embrace humanity and the universe, in its scope.

The atom bomb was exploded twenty years ago; we now have the hydrogen bomb, are faced with the cobalt bomb and may soon be confronted with even more powerful and far reaching developments. We cannot hope to keep pace with, much less control and direct, "stratospheric", "fissionary" and "fusionary" forces, if I might be permitted so to designate them, with thinking at the pedestrian, bow and arrow, and gunpowder levels. We must train ourselves to think in terms of humanity and the universe.

But when I say humanity and the universe, I do not mean to confine myself to man and his life on this planet in

all its dimensions. That again is a limitation which tends to distort our perspective. To prove adequate to our needs of to-day and to-morrow and to exhibit things and values in their true proportions, our perspective must acquire the widest, almost a limitless, sweep. In the speed of our movement, we have pierced the supersonie barrier; our moral and spiritual vision must also pierce the barriers set up by our present concepts of life and mortality. We must learn to think, not only in terms of life and death, but also in terms of the hereafter. It is only then that our perspective will become correctly adjusted and we shall be able to devise and put into effect a true standard of values. If we do not begin to think in terms of eternity, our thinking will be out of measure and will continue unbalanced. We must, therefore, adjust our thinking to new dimensions, namely—Humanity, Universe and Eternity.

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I am a Muslim. My thinking is stimulated, nourished and sustained by the eternal verities taught by Islam. I would beg you, therefore, to bear with me while I proceed to illustrate what I have just said, from the source that I have indicated, namely—the Quran, the scripture of Islam. I venture to think that you will find little in what I may submit with which you may be disposed to find fault. Indeed, you will recognise that this guidance proceeds from the Source that we are all happy to share and bear witness to. The Quran opens with the brief verse :

> "The perfect worthiness of all true praise belongs to God, Who nourishes, sustains and, stage by stage, leads towards perfection all the universes".

Thus, at the very outset, our thinking is lifted to the level of the universe and its stage by stage evolution towards perfection, or, in other words, towards greater and greater beneficence. It is worthy of note that the plural and not the singular has been employed in respect of the universe. There are universes beyond universes : they are all evolving towards ever increasing beneficence.

We are further reminded that all this beneficence is for the service and benefit of man.

> "God has subjected to your service whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth; all this is from Him. In this surely are Signs for a people who reflect". (XLV : 14)

To discover these signs and to derive full benefit from them, it is necessary to reflect upon the phenomena to which attention has been drawn. Here is thus a direct exhortation to lift our thinking to the level of the universe for the benefit of the whole of mankind. There are many other verses in the Quran which reinforce the same idea of the subordination of all that is in the universe to the service of man and the exhortation to ponder, to reflect and to reason. For instance:

> "He grants wisdom to whom He pleases, and whoever is granted wisdom is indeed granted abundant good; and none would be reminded save those endowed with understanding." (II : 270).

The principles of "fission" and "fusion" are but forward steps towards the enrichment and fulfilment of human life and should not be a source of fear or anxiety. They are, as I have said, gifts and bounties; an accession of power and strength. It is their use or abuse which would convert them into instruments of good or evil.

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The question remains, what is it that will serve to safeguard humanity against the abuse of further accessions of power and strength? We must recognise that the march of knowledge and the advance of science will not be reversed or checked. Nor must we seek to reverse, check or slow them down. Any such attempt would in any case prove futile and would, moreover, be evidence that we are seeking to reverse our destiny.

Those of us who believe that God is truly the Creator of the Universe and not merely a so-called First Cause, must perforce believe that the universe, and so also man, have been created with a purpose and that we must constantly advance towards the fulfilment of that purpose.

The Quran says:

"God is the Creator of all things and He is Guardian over them all: His are the keys of the heavens and the earth: Those who reject the signs of God, they are the losers". (XXXIX: 63—64)

"We have not created the heaven and the earth and all that is between the two in sport. Had We wished to find a pastime, we would surely have found it in what is with Us, if at all we had been so inclined". (XXI: 17-18)

"We have not created the heaven and earth and all that is between them in vain. This is the view of those who reject Us. Woe then to those who reject Us, because of the Fire." (XXXVIII: 28)

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"God has created the heaven and the earth with truth and that every soul may be requited with that which it earns; and they shall not be wronged". (XLV: 23)

"Did you then think that We had created you without purpose and that you would not be brought back to Us?" (XXIII: 116)

God is the Creator of the universe, the universe is under His control. He has created the universe and man with a purpose. We must all return to Him and are accountable to Him. This consciousness must inspire, direct and guide us all the time. The purpose of man's creation is that he should become a manifestation of God's attributes, in other words the image of God. (LI: 57)

All the ills from which we suffer to-day are a consequence of our neglect of this purpose and our apathy in its pursuit. In fact, most of us are prone to substitute the means which have been provided for the attainment of this purpose, for the purpose itself. We occupy ourselves with the diligent pursuit of the means as ends in themselves: they become the idols that we worship. Thus we constantly defeat the true purpose

of our existence and by creating multiple barriers between ourselves and God, we finally shut ourselves off from Him.

Our deepest concern should be to put ourselves in accord with God, our Creator, the true source of all beneficence. How to do it is no great mystery. The Quran puts it in very simple language :

> "When My servants ask thee about Me, say:
> 'I am near, I answer the prayer of the supplicant
> when he prays to Me'. So they should hearken
> to Me and believe in Me, that they may follow
> the right way." (II : 187)

Once we have established our relationship with God and are in accord with Him, it would become easy to think in terms of humanity. It is only *through* God that we can adjust our relationship with our fellow beings of all races, colours, creeds and classes. Any other approach is bound to be partial and must fall short in some respect or the other. The realisation that every human being is God's creature, servant, ambassador, with a spark of divinity in him or her, alone will enable each of us, not only to exercise tolerance and patience, to cultivate sympathy and understanding, but also to respect the *personality* of every other and thus to promote the dignity and worth of the human person. We must recognise the simple fact that each one of us is related to every other and indeed to the whole universe only through his or her *own* personality. The universe has a meaning for each one of us only through his or her own individual personality. Outside of our own personality it has no meaning for us. While we are conscious of this fact *vis-a-vis* ourselves, are we equally conscious of it in respect of every other human being? This lies at the root of the whole concept of the brotherhood of man, of which we hear so much these days and of which we still see so little in practice across the social, religious, racial and colour divisions. we must respect, revere, reverence the personality of every other human being to make brotherhood a reality. This can come about only by the realisation of our common relationship

to each other through our common allegiance to God and our holding fast to that allegiance.

> "Hold fast, all together, by the rope of God and be not divided; and remember the favour of God, which He bestowed upon you when you were enemies and He united your hearts in love, so that thereby through His grace you became as brothers. You were on the brink of a pit of fire and He saved you from it. Thus does God explain to you His Signs that you may be guided". (III : 104)

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Yet in our relationship with our fellow-beings, as in all other relationships, we must have some standard of worth and value. If it is not to be family, rank, wealth, office, race, colour etc., what then shall it be? Here is the standard.

> "Oh mankind, We have created you from male and female and have made you into tribes and nations for greater facility of intercourse. Verily, the most honourable among you, in the Sight of God, is he who is the most righteous among you. Surely God is All-Knowing, All-Aware". (XLIX : 14)

If the purity and righteousness of a person's life become the sole criteria of honour among mankind, as we are taught they are in the sight of God, we shall very soon achieve a much needed moral and spiritual revolution in society and in its outlook. All other standards would then adjust themselves in subordination to this. For, again, it is obvious and at various places the Quran recognises, that all factors in human life have their uses and their value and that they can all serve a beneficent purpose if they are properly regulated and adjusted. Islam is a faith that insists upon the acceptance of life on a positive and constructive basis and disapproves and even condemns the rejection, negation, or stultification of life. It seeks to inculcate a consciousness of the capacity and dignity of life and a recognition of the far-reaching consequences of human

action and human thought. We are admonished:

> "Oh ye who believe, fear God and let every soul look to what it sends forth for the morrow. Fear God: Verily God is well aware of what you do. Be not like those who forgot God and whom He has consequently caused to forget their own souls". (XIX : 19-20)

It is disregard of the morrow that has falsified our standards of values.

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> "They say, 'There is nothing but this our present life; we live here and we die. Time alone destroys us.' They have no knowledge concerning it, they do but conjecture.....Say, 'It is God Who gives you life, then causes you to die; then He will gather you together unto the Day of Resurrection about which there is no doubt. But most men know not'. To God belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth and when the Hour shall come, on that day those who follow falsehood will be the losers". (XLV : 25 and 27-28)

The Quran is as insistent upon belief in the life after death as it is upon belief in the Existence and Unity of God. It warns that without this belief, human life would not be in balance. It is only through achieving this "balance", neither transgressing nor falling short of the measure set up by God, that life on earth can become beneficent.

> "Verily, We sent Our Messengers with Manifest Signs and sent down with them the Book and the Balance that men should conduct themselves with equity". (LVII : 26)
>
> "The heaven He has raised high and set up a measure, so that you keep the balance with equity and neither transgress nor fall short of the measure". (LV : 8-10)

It is only a life which is in "balance" in the perspective of to-day and of to-morrow, that is to say, a perspective that embraces both the foreground of the here and the background of the hereafter, in accordance with the measure set up by God, neither transgressing nor falling short of it, that can be truly beneficent. It is only men who lead such lives who will always stand with truth and justice and conduct themselves with equity. In their hands and under their control, all powers and all forces "stratospheric", "fissionary", "fusionary" and still others that may be developed will only be instruments of beneficence, that will be employed for fostering human welfare to the greater glory and praise of God.

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It may be asked, is this not merely a counsel of perfection. It certainly *is* a counsel of perfection; nothing less would be adequate. But it is not merely a counsel in the sense of being only academic speculation. What has been said here by way of introduction and illustration and that which is expounded in the Quran in greater detail as the way of the beneficent life in all spheres, spiritual, moral, physical, is all eminently practicable and can easily be put into effect.

But it may be said further, what about the mischief that may be wrought involving the destruction of culture and civilisation, if not the destruction of life itself, by the irresponsible conduct of those who may not be prepared to subscribe to these values and may in fact be opposed to them?

In the first place, while offering guidance on all fundamentals affecting various aspects of human life, the Quran takes note also of that which has just been mentioned. It bids us to be steadfast in upholding beneficent values, but also warns us to be constantly vigilant and on guard against those who would seek to destroy them.

> "Oh ye who believe, be steadfast and strive to excel in steadfastness and be on your guard and keep your duty to God that you may prosper". (III : 201)

Eternal vigilance is the price of security and the safeguarding of beneficence.

That our vigilance and all the sacrifices that it might entail should weigh in our favour in the Balance, we must take a firm stand in support of truth and righteousness and proclaim this as our sole and complete ideal. In other words, we must definitely take our stand on the side of God and substitute His will rather than our own as our motive.

This might mean for some of us a complete overhauling of the manner of our lives, of our conduct, and of our values. In other words, we may need to carry through a spiritual and moral revolution, at least matching, if not in its turn outpacing, the scientific and technological revolution, the unfolding of which we are privileged to witness.

The proclamation and repetition of high moral principles, though necessary, is of little value unless we carry them into effect and illustrate them in our conduct. A rift between our professions and our practices would portend as grave danger as the rift between our scientific and technological achievements and our spiritual and moral standards.

We must completely eschew hypocrisy and make believe. This would go far to reassure those who may entertain doubt of our motives and be afraid of our intentions.

> "Oh ye who believe, why do you say that which you do not. Most displeasing is it in the sight of God that you should say and do not". (LXI : 34)

Having set our own house in order by the adoption of wholly beneficent standards of values and having brought our conduct into conformity with those values, we must convince those with whom we seek to enter into agreements, covenants and practical dealings, of our utter sincerity of purpose. We must avoid all equivocation.

> "Oh ye who believe, do your duty to God and say the straightforward word; He will bless your works with beneficence and will eliminate the consequences of your defaults". (XXX: 71-72)

All engagements, trusts and covenants must be fully and faithfully carried out in the letter as well as in the spirit. The Quran, while enumerating the characteristics of those who would make a success of their lives says:

> "And those who are watchful of their trusts and their covenants". (XXIII: 9)

Patience and steadfastness must inspire both our policies and our conduct. This is a hard discipline, but is made easy for those who have the certainty of faith in God and the ultimate return to Him.

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> "Seek help with patience and prayer; this indeed is hard save for the humble in spirit, who know for certain that they will meet their Lord, and that to Him they will return". (XXIV: 6-7)

But all this, while helping to set up a society strong in beneficence, would not necessarily secure it against opposition, persecution and the kind of situation which has come to be known as "cold war". In fact, history shows that every attempt to set up such a society and to conduct it on these principles has always met with opposition and persecution. Even then the remedy is steadfastness and righteous living.

> "You shall surely be tried in your possessions and in your persons and you shall surely hear many hurtful things from those who were given the Book before you and from those who set up associates with God; but if you show fortitude and act righteously, that indeed is a matter of high resolve." (III: 187)

For good is not only beneficent in itself, it is a positive

force against evil, which is negative. The one has the qualities of life, health and progress, while the other is a distemper or disease which, if not cured and removed brings death. Evil is curable only by good, for good prevails over evil and overcomes it.

> "Good drives away evil; this is a reminder for those who would remember". (II : 115)

Alas, we often forget this reminder. It is so easy to yield to the temptation of giving as "good" as we receive; only in this context, "good" is a euphemism for "bad". In situations like those with which civilisation is faced to-day the foundations of a culture are put to their severest test. If they survive the test, the culture will endure and flourish even more vigorously, though the superstructure may be shaken and may have to be put in order. If the foundations give way, everything will fall into ruin. The foundations will not endure unless they rest upon truth and righteousness. Those who build these, build on a firm and secure rock; those who build on falsehood and evil or on a mixture of good and evil, build on sand. He who stands firm on goodness will not only save himself, he may also save his brother who is opposed to him and is seeking to injure him and to do him harm.

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> "Good and evil are not alike. Repel evil with that which is best, and lo, he between whom and thyself was enmity will become as though he were a warm friend. But none is granted this save those who are steadfast; and none is granted this save those who possess a large share of good". (XLI: 35-36)

Patience, steadfastness, high resolve, combined with watchfulness and vigilance and a firm determination that good shall not relax in any circumstances, even under constant provocation, its effort to overcome evil: this is the only rule of conduct that will avail in the crisis through which mankind is passing.

We must make a firm resolve that we shall co-operate

with each other only in the promotion of beneficence and righteousness and that no amount of provocation shall induce us to lend our support to oppression or wrong.

During the first thirteen years of the Ministry of the Holy Prophet of Islam (on whom be the peace and blessings of God), the Muslims were bitterly and brutally persecuted in Mecca. In the end this little band was forced to quit Mecca, one by *one, and found* a refuge in Medina, where the Prophet also joined them. There, too, they were not left in peace. The Meccans organised expedition after expedition against the Muslims to to destroy them and their faith. The Muslims were anxious to be permitted to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca and to worship there in the Sacred Mosque, but the Meccans would not hear of it, nor would they abate their aggressive policies and actions. Finally, Mecca fell. The Muslims entered it with dignity, exacting no retribution and imposing no penalties for the wrongs and injustices that they had suffered during twenty years. The Quran laid down:

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> "Let not the hostility of a people, that they hindered you from the Sacred Mosque, incite you to transgress. Co-operate with one another in righteousness and piety; do not assist one another in sin and transgression. Fear God; surely God is severe in punishment." (V: 3)

On the other hand, Islam does *not* teach submission to evil for that would amount to supporting and fostering it. Islam conceives of a truly beneficent society as composed of persons who seek to maintain a just balance between the values pertaining to this life and the next, constantly fostering good and restraining wrong and evil. The following may furnish some idea of the attitudes that Islam inculcates:

> "Whatever is bestowed upon you is but the temporary provision of this life; that which is with God is better and more lasting for those who

believe and put their trust in their Lord; those who eschew the grievous sins, as well as indecencies, and when they are wroth, they forgive; those who hearken to their Lord and observe prayer and whose affairs are determined by mutual consultation and who spend constantly out of that which We have bestowed upon them; those who when an injury is inflicted upon them, defend themselves. The recompense of an injury is a penalty proportionate thereto; but whoso forgives and thereby brings about reformation, his reward is with God. Surely He loves not wrong-doers. But no blame attaches to those who defend themselves when they have been transgressed against. Blame attaches only to those who commit wrongs against others and transgress in the earth without justification. Such will have grievous punishment. But he who is patient and forgives—that surely is a matter of high resolve". (XLII: 37-44)

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It will be noted that even defensive action is permitted only where a wrong has been suffered, though forgiveness is held up as the more meritorious choice. On the other hand, infliction of wrong and transgression is condemned.

Should, however, aggression be embarked upon, which can only be stopped by the exercise of force, permission to use force is accorded.

"Permission to fight is given to those against whom war is made, because they have been wronged and God indeed has power to help them: those who have been driven out from their homes unjustly only because they said, 'our Lord is God'. If God did not repel some men by means of others, cloisters, churches, synagogues and mosques, wherein the name of God is oft commemorated, would surely be destroyed. God will of a surety

help those who help Him. God is indeed the Powerful, Mighty-those who, if we establish them in the earth, will observe Prayer and give the alms and enjoin good and forbid evil. With God rests the final issue of all affairs .. . Whoso retaliates with the like of that with which he has been afflicted and is then transgressed against, God will surely help him. God effaces sins and forgives them". (XXII : 40-42 and 61)

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Once fighting is forced upon such a society as is here described, the fight must be pursued with fortitude and vigour. Detailed instructions have been laid down to render war as humane as possible. Fighting must be confined to combatants. Women, children, old men, priests and those dedicated to the service of society must not be molested. Cruel and barbarous practices must be eschewed, even if they are resorted to by the enemy. Fighting must be brought to a close as speedily as possible. The object should be to restore conditions of peace, security, justice and freedom of conscience and not to crush the enemy. (VIII : 40)

If at any time in the course of the fighting the enemy should be inclined towards a truce, the opportunity should be embraced to put an end to the fighting.

> "If they incline towards Peace, incline thou also towards it and put thy trust in God. Surely it is He Who is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. If they intend to deceive thee, then surely God is sufficient for thee". (VIII : 62-63)

Should punitive action become necessary, it should be limited to the degree of wrong suffered and should not go beyond it, but if the wrong is suffered in patience, that is better.

> "Should you have to retaliate, then confine your retaliation to the extent of the wrong suffered,

> but if you are patient, that is best. Endure thou with patience, verily patience is possible only with the help of God. Grieve not for thy opponents, nor feel distressed because of their plots. Verily God is with the righteous and the doers of good". (XVI : 127-129)

Should hostilities break out between two peoples it is the duty of all the others to take combined action to bring about a peaceful settlement of the dispute between them. Should one of the parties be quilty of transgression, all must combine to fight it till the prepared to accept a just settlement of the original dispute. Peace guilty party is should then be made between them on the basis of justice and equity. (XLIX : 10)

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This is a brief summary of the principles which would afford protection against the abuse or misuse of nuclear, atomic or any other kind of power and would confine their use to peaceful and beneficent purposes. To the degree to which these principles are accepted and put into effect, we shall get rid of our fears and anxieties and develop a sense of security devoting ourselves to progress and the promotion of human welfare. We do not need to suffer any despondency that guidance adequate to our needs is not available. I have referred to the opening verse of the Quran. The very next verse mentions one of the attributes of God as Rahman. The word is commonly translated as the Beneficent, but its exact import is "He who makes provision for our every need before the need manifests itself". We may be sure, therefore, that He has made provision for our guidance through the epoch which is opening up before us. By accepting and acting upon that guidance, we can make our lives wholly and truly beneficent. This alone would give us complete security. We shall thereby disarm all aggression. Should aggression nevertheless be embarked upon and persisted in, we shall, having put ourselves and all aspects of our lives in complete accord with Divine guidance, but only then and not merely because we have chosen any particular label, be granted the strength and the perseverance to overcome it, even, if we

may happen to be smaller in numbers and weaker in resources. History bears ample witness to this.

> "How many a small party has triumphed over a large party, by God's command: God is with the steadfast". (II : 250)

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The Quran says:

> "God is the light of the heavens and the earth". (XXIV : 36).
>
> "He brings men out of darkness into the light through His Signs and bestows light upon His servants by which they are guided and in which they walk." (LVII : 10, 13 and 29)

The principal function of light is to make everything appear in its true reality. We must constantly seek God's light for our guidance, so that we may be enabled to see everything in its true reality and may be safeguarded against falling into error. We have His firm promise that if we strive for Him, He will guide us along His paths and that He is ever with those who act righteously. (XXIX : 70)

Before I conclude, I should like to say a word to remove a misconception concerning Islam which is very common in the West. It is often said that the attitude of Islam is one of opposition to other faiths. I shall here content myself with making two quotations, to repel this charge:

> "Surely those who have believed, and the Jews, and the Sabians, and the Christians—whoso believes in God and the Last Day and acts righteously, on them shall come no fear nor shall they grieve". (V : 70)
>
> "Say, oh people of the Book, come to a word equal between us and you—that we worship none but God and that we associate no partners with Him and that some of us take not others for Lords besides God". (III : 65)

That invitation stands for all time.

"All praise to God, the Lord of all the Universes"!

The Truth About Khatm-e-Nabuvvat IV

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AN EXAMINATION OF NEGATIVE TRADITIONS

The Late Hazrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad M. A.
Eng. N.R.A.G. soofi

After discussing the positive traditions relating to the finality of prophethood, I now propose to take up negative traditions. By these I mean the traditions that are apparently understood to close the door of prophethood after the Holy Apostle. These traditions are of different categories and in their reported versions, words of varying meaning have been used by the Holy Prophet. For instance, in some, the expression used is, "There is no prophet after me", in others it has been said, "Had there been a prophet after me, he would be Omar"; yet in some, the words used are, "I am the last of the prophets"; again in others the following words have been used : "I and prophets preceding me are like a house with a stone missing. My advent befittingly marks the emplacement of this brick". And still in some other reports the expression used is : "There will appear thirty impostors after me, each of them claiming to be a prophet".

This represents a summary of the traditions which are, in their apparent meaning, understood to bolt the door on prophethood. I would not here go into the authenticity of these traditions as considerations of space do not admit of a detailed criticism. However (as I will by the grace of God prove) it is not correct to adduce from these traditions the evidence that our opponents seek to draw. A careful examination will, on the contrary, reveal that while legislative prophethood and independent apostleship ceased with the advent of the Holy Prophet, subordinate prophethood which is a reflex projection and in point of fact part and parcel of Muhammadan prophethood, has certainly not so ceased. Not one of the foregoing traditions put

a period to subordinate prophethood of the type above described. Before I take up these traditions, piece by piece, I would like to draw attention in a general manner to a basic point which will lead to a clearer understanding of this question.

In relevance to the question of the finality of prophethood, we cite a number of traditions which prove the continuity of prophethood; our opponents similarly put forth some traditions which apparently close the door of prophethood. This apparent conflict is a basic point and it has to be recognized that if it is not resolved, it leads to the unfortunate criticism that the Holy Prophet made statements which were contradictory in terms, that he said at times that "there will be no prophet after me" and at others that "there could be a prophet after me"; and again "I am the last prophet" and yet again that "after me will appear among my followers a Messiah who will be a prophet". This apparent conflict must be resolved. It is as much our duty as that of the other Musalamans to give it the most serious consideration and honestly lend ourselves to a sincere effort to reconcile or resolve this apparent contradiction (as in our sincere view the conflict is only a superficial one and there can be no material contradiction in the statements of the Holy Prophet).

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We have, as it will be agreed on all hands, only two alternatives before us, to dispose of this apparent conflict:

Firstly, that contradictions in these conflicting traditions be referred to the arbitration of the word of the Holy Quran. The tradition receiving Quranic support should be accepted and the other rejected as unauthentic. This is the course to which Quran has guided us. It says, "which tradition shall you accept beside Allah and his verses".

If, however, our opponents are not agreeable to this simple and straight course, then there is the other alternative. We must hit upon a way to reconcile the traditions of both the categories, the positive and the negative. A conclusion must be reached elucidating the category of prophethood, continuance of which is supported by the relevant group of

traditions and similarly specifying the prophethood cessation of which has been pronounced by the relevant mass of negative traditions. It will save us from an unnecessarily unending controversy and at the same time open the way to the acceptance of traditions of both the categories.

Quran's verdict is in our favour

The above are the only two courses whereby this seeming conflict can be resolved. It is the duty of every true Muslim to give this question, which involves fundamentals of faith, his most sensible and honest consideration, to seek a solution of this problem. The method of reference to the Quran is a clear one. As I have said in the opening chapter of this treatise, there is not a single verse, or even a part of a verse of the Holy Quran that puts a period to Prophethood after the advent of the Holy Prophet. On the other hand, the entire narrative of the Holy Quran highlights the theme that the gates of the bounties and mercies of Heaven have been opened wider than ever before since the advent of our Lord and Master (may peace be on him). Our opponents have nothing to put forth except the verse relating to '*Khatamannabbiyyin*' which, as we have already proved, far from closing the door of prophethood, only confirms the pre-eminent status and grace-bearing character of the Holy Prophet whose seal must henceforth be the hallmark of his devoted and devout followers, who shall, through him, be worthy of Divine graces granted directly heretofore to prophets of yore. This is precisely the view that we propound.

Briefly speaking, not a single verse of the Quran lends colour to the theory of cessation of prophethood after the Holy Prophet. It is with consummate wisdom that Allah, in the Opening Chapter of the Quran, pointedly starts with the grand theme that the bounties granted to preceding dispensations severally shall henceforth, without exception, be granted in their fullest measure and pefected form to the followers of the Holy Prophet. Can a book that starts with such an all-embracing outlook lend support to the narrow perspective of the Prophet's

mission ending up in the anti-climax of drying up the flow of Divine grace and bounty and arresting at once the current hitherto pursuing its normal course.

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So far as the apparent contradictions in the various traditions are concerned, its resolution does hardly present any insuperable difficulty, as the conflict is one of a superficial nature and in no way a real one. On the other hand, we cite a number of traditions which conclusively establish the fact that after the Holy Prophet a follower of his, seeking the grace of his light and bearing his reflex, can attain to the pedestal of prophethood. On the other hand, the other party comes forth with a few traditions which countenance the view that there is no prophet after the Holy Prophet who is the last of the line. At the surface, a major contradiction confronts us. But cannot this conflict be resolved with the simple stroke of reason that the expressions, "There is no prophet after me" and "I am the last prophet" used by the Holy Prophet, ban the advent of a prophet independent of him, nullifying his dispensation and otherwise detached, in respect of his status, vis-a-vis the prophethood of the Holy Prophet, viewed in this sense a new significance thus becomes manifest in the afore-mentioned traditions. In respect of the other group of traditions of the Holy Prophet, relating to the appearance of a prophet after him and pertaining to the Promised Messiah whose advent as a prophet has been foretold by him, the Holy Prophet clearly meant that a spiritual son of the Prophet can, in the service of his religion, seeking light from his light as does the moon from the sun, attain prophethood. The prophethood of such a person is thus in no way derogatory to the status of the Holy Prophet and the significance of the tradition "there is no prophet after me" is not belittled in any way, for, a branch is but an offshoot of the tree nor is the shadow apart from the substance.

It will be appreciated that the view propounded above is a simple and straight answer to the superficial conflict in the

traditions which is thus disposed of in a word by a slight change in our angle. Every tradition of the Holy Prophet thus turns into a balm for the heart and a source of inner satisfaction. Controversy is cut short. I am fully aware of the fact that the authenticity of these traditions has been the subject of unending argument and there is plenty of room for polemics in this field: but I do not want to enter into this controversy and am prepared, for the sake of argument, to accept all the traditions under reference. I do believe that the Holy Prophet claimed that "there is no prophet after me", I also believe that the Holy Prophet claimed to be the last Prophet. But I am not prepared to put such construction on these traditions as tend to contradict other traditions. I cannot intrepret these traditions in a sense derogatory to the dignity of the Holy Prophet. In short, when accepting one category of traditions, I do equally credit the other group of traditions which confirm that a disciple-prophet can appear after the Holy Prophet following his footsteps and that the Promised Messiah is a spiritual heir to the Holy Prophet and thus elevated to the dignity of Prophethood, I accept traditions of both categories as, the resolution of their superficial conflict, in the light of the foregoing interpretation, reveals the great glory of the Prophet whereby his servants may, through his bounty, attain to prophethood. Truly did say the Holy Prophet, "Had Moses and Jesus been alive they would not but follow my lead". A non-Muslim could very well characterize it as a tall order lacking testimony. But by choosing one of his servants for the office of Promised Messiah and granting him the honour of prophethood, God has implemented the truth of the Prophet's claim and facts have affixed the seal of veracity. Are our opponents prepared to mind this evidence of hard facts? Are they prepared, like us to accept all the relevant traditions to resolve this conflict? If they cannot then let them ponder well, for, they reject the Quran totally and turn their back on what is better than half of the relevant traditions. Their's is a losing bargain, for in final analysis, they only detract from the dignity of the Holy Prophet and dry up the stream of Divine grace.

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Now I will briefly deal with the negative traditions, severally. In this category the foremost tradition that we are up against is "there is no prophet after me". This tradition is often repeated by our opponents in support of their claim that the Holy Prophet has clearly laid down that there shall be no prophet after him. They have quoted this tradition in their writings and in their speeches ad infinitum and have with their erroneous exposition considerably influenced the heads and hearts of the people. But God willing this magic will dissipate itself before long,

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This is true that literally لا نبی بعدی bears undoubtedly the meaning 'there is no prophet after me'. But it requires no uncommon learning to see that at times, the word 'لا' (No) negatives a particular contingency and does not necessarily signify a general negation but only a restricted one which, according to Arabic grammar, is termed as "specific negative". In Urdu language too a parallel example will be found in the case of an eminently successful and able Headmaster of a school said to "have topped in merit the rest of his category in the area". An expression like this "Lo that is a Headmaster and there is no other than him", would certainly not mean literally that there is no Headmaster other than him in the whole area; all that it will signify is that there is none of his ability and eminence in the region. No sensible person will dispute the fact that such expressions occur in every language and are in common use and in wide currency. In this connection we indeed hardly need seek parallels in other languages, for, the Holy Prophet himself has illustrated an example of this idiom giving the whole of this controversy the final quietus Said the Holy Prophet, "There shall not be another Ceaser after the death of the present Ceasar nor another Xerxes after the death of the present Xerxes". In the above tradition Ceasar and Xerxes have been used in a general sense apparently and no qualification of a restrictive nature has been affixed. For, the Ceasar and Xerxes under reference were after their death succeeded by others; in fact the Ceasars continued to rule for a period of over five to six hundred years. Scholars are agreed that when the Holy Prophet made

the statement there will be no Ceasar nor Xerxes after the death of the ones ruling at the time he only meant that there will not be one equal to them in greatness and grandeur or in the vastness of dominion. It was precisely in the same sense that the Holy Prophet said "There will be no prophet after me" : he simply meant that there shall not be a prophet after him with a new law or recipient of office independent of him. He did not mean to say that there would be absolutely no prophet after him. In a manner of speaking he elaborated the meaning of his statement "لا نبی بعدی" "(There is no prophet after me)". Thus, as the latter statement meant that there shall be no greater Ceasar after the death of the present one, "so shall there be no prophet bearing a law and holding office independent of me after my commission". This is too evident to leave any room for doubt. Besides, the word بعدی (commonly translated as "after me") deserves to be particularly examined, It must be noted in this connection that the expression بعد (after) is used in Arabic language in the following three different senses.

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Indicative of place. (1) In one sense 'بعد' (after) would mean behind, as for instance, in respect of a house being behind (بعد) another house (2) in another sense, used idiomatically, the word بعد (after) will convey the meaning of 'opposite' as, for instance, accepting one thing as against or besides (leaving aside) the other, which may be thus said to be behind it. Says the Quran for instance "what statement will they believe besides (بعد) Allah and his verses".

(3) *Indicative of period of time*, as for instance after (بعد) the passing away of something or the expiry of its period, some thing else follows. There is no gainsaying the fact that the word is definitely used in the above three senses according to Arabic syntax and idiom.

We need not indulge in a discussion of the meaning referred to in (1) above. For, in so far as the subject matter of our present discussion is concerned, this meaning is specific to the particular tradition which contains the statement the Holy

Prophet made to Ali on the eve of his departure for the battle of Tabuk, "You are to me like Aaron to Moses" (i.e. as Moses left Aaron behind during his absence on a journey, so am I leaving you behind in my absence on a journey (except that a prophet officiated Moses in his absence) "there is no prophet in my absence". In this tradition the word (بعد) (after or behind) has been used as a ظرف مکانی (passive participle). It is unequivocally clear that Hazrat Ali who officiated the Holy Prophet in Medina, during his absence, has been declared as a non-prophet in status. Since however this tradition is a singular one in that it relates to a specific event and the words لا نبی بعدی (There is no prophet after me) have been used in certain other traditions as well whithout reference to any particular context, I do not feel inclined to go into it and seek refuge behind it. I admit that the words "there is no prophet after me" or similar expressions have been used on other occasions as well and the crux of the argument consists in these general references rather than in the specific incident relating to Hazrat Ali.

The word 'بعد' also means 'besides' which carries with it a sense of preference as, for instance, says the Quran "what will the people believe after (leaving aside or besides) Allah and his verses?" In the light of this meaning, the import of the tradition لا نبی بعدی (there is no prophet after me) becomes quite clear. It will in this sense, mean that there shall be no prophet after me who bears a law besides my law and declaring it void: whosoever comes shall walk in my steps and bear my flag.

The third meaning which relates to the passage of time signifies succession of one by the other, after one has run the due course, in a certain period of time. In point of time one comes after the other. In this sense the tradition لا نبی بعدی (there is no prophet after me) will mean "there is no prophet after the expiry of my period". The meaning in this light is too unambiguous and manifest to call for any comment. It makes it clear that after the Holy Prophet shall come none

who may initiate a new dispensation declaring his (the prophet's) period at an end. This meaning is certainly not susceptible of any objection as, it is admitted on all hands, that the Holy Prophet was comissioned with a final and ever-lasting code and his period extends till the Doomsday. The Holy Prophet declared so very often. On one occasion raising his hand, he joined his two fingers and emphasized: "I and the Doomsday are adjacent to each other as are these two fingers of my hands," (i.e. there is no gap between the two).

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Since the term of the Prophet's dispensation extends to eternity, لا نبی بعدی (there is no prophet after me) shall, in the sense of ظرف زمانی necessarily mean that there is no such prophet after him as would put a period to his term which extends to the Doomsday. It is a pity that due to their myopic conception our opponents limit the meaning of بعدی (after me) to the physical life-time of the Holy Prophet, while the Prophet meant (and truly in consonance with his lofty station) that his term was ever-lasting and that there could not be a prophet who will cut across his jurisdiction and his term. The word 'بعد' (after), it must be carefully noted, is thus capable of expressing only one sense, that of termination of the Prophet's period and suspension of his law and appearance of a new prophet. That has been expressly negatived as the Prophet's term extends to the day of Judgement and shall not come to an end. The tradition 'لا نبی بعدی' points to this subtle and learned interpretation. It is painful to observe how the materialistic-minded shallow thinkers have limited its significance to his physical life-time, thus lowering the loftiness of its conception.

In a word, we believe in the tradition "there is no Prophet after me" in the fullness of faith and declare openly that there is no prophet after our Master the Holy Prophet. But we do not subscribe to the view that the water of his fountain has run dry (God forbid!); on the contrary we believe that his prophethood is co-extensive with eternity and whosoever shall come henceforth, must come enwrapped in the mantle of His Prophethood and that his apostleship would thus be subordinate to and not independent of the Holy Prophet. For, there shall not be one, be he the

Messiah of Nazareth or any other, who dare encroach upon the Holy Prophet's term of office and put his foot on the pedestal of apostleship, in contravention of the Holy Prophet's seal of Prophethood till the Doomsday. Our Master is verily pre-eminent among all his predecessors and successors and the chief among the tribe of men. Those who preceded him prepared the ground for his advent as says he كنت نبياً و أدم بين الماء و الطين and those who succeed him shall do so as his servants seeking his light and as his reflection. This is the true significance of the verse خاتم النبيين and the tradition لا نبى بعدى. What a pity therefore that the materialist thinkers of today prefer the superficial sense of the term to the lofty truths embodied therein.

In recapitulation, we reiterate our faith in the tradition and verify its truth and authenticity except that it means that (1) There shall not be a prophet, such as can declare the law of Muhammad as abrogated, for, his Law is eternal and shall not be replaced with another dispensation. (2) There shall not be a prophet who can cut across the term of the Muhammadan Prophethood and initiate a new dispensation putting a period on Muhammadan dispensation. On the contrary whoever comes shall be to the Prophet like a branch to the tree and shall seek his light from the Apostle's and thus his prophethood shall subsist in Muhammadan Prophethood and not be extraneous thereto.

The great reformers and Divines of Islam have time and again upheld this sublime truth. Even the Holy Prophet's favourite wife Hazrat Ayesha (Allah be pleased with her) said "Say that he is the Seal of Prophets but say not that there is not a prophet after him".

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The Maulvi of today is certainly hugging the low earth and does not reach out to our kind mother's loftiness of thought. She is clearly elaborating the tradition 'لا نبى بعدى' which she fears let hasty-minded people, failing to realize its true meaning should fall in the error of construing as finally bolting the door on prophethood after the Holy Prophet and warning in a revealing

manner against this obvious mistake, enjoins reading the tradition 'لا نبی بعدی' in the light of the verse خاتم النبیین as the latter contains the essence of reality.

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Clearly the tradition لا نبی بعدی is capable of only two possible interpretations: one which our opponents put forth, namely, that the door of every type of prophethood has been finally sealed after the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace of Allah on him); and the other interpretation advanced by us, that no such prophet as would cut short the term of the Holy Prophet shall appear after him ; but a subordinate reflector-Prophet bearing the seal of his certificate, may appear as his disciple and follower. This is precisely what the verse خاتم النبیین purports to convey as explained above. It is noteworthy how clearly our affectionate mother Hazrat Ayesha (peace of Allah be on her) supported our foregoing interpretation when she hinted a note of caution against the likelihood of a wrong construction and directed attention towards the general sense of the verse خاتم النبیین which, she stressed, stood for "Seal of the Prophets". There shall be *no prophet with a law nor a prophet independent of him henceforth* as such a phenomena violates the sanctity of the Seal of Prophethood. But on the other hand, a disciple-prophet reflecting the Holy Prophet, radiating his light and receiving his grace, will be in order, since his prophethoot is under his Law and in fact a projection of the Holy Prophet's own prophethood.

I am lost in my admiration of the surprising intuition of this eminent lady and affectionate mother who could, so unerringly, foresee 1400 years ahead, the coming dangers and warn against such construction of the tradition لا نبی بعدی as were against the spirit of the verse خاتم النبیین and advised a construction that was compatible with it. She thus, indirectly, expounded meaning of the verse خاتم النبیین "that the verse does not end prophethood and on the other hand it promises continued flow of Divine grace through the Prophet and under his Seal".

May Allah, bless the Prophet, his people and his spouses !

I feel that this discussion has taken much longer space than I had mentally reserved for it. I will now therefore conclude it with only one more reference and then take up other traditions. Hazrat Imam Sherani (died in A.H.927) says: "The statement of the Prophet that there shall be no prophet after him simply means that there shall be no such prophet after him as bears a new Law" (Alyavakit Valjawahir Vol. II Page 27). The above explanation by Hazrat Imam Sherani is clear and unambiguous. No sensible person can entertain the least doubt about it even for a moment. It will be silly, if not dishonest, to raise, in this connection, a question with regard to the personal belief held by Imam Sherani in this matter as, we have disposed of this irrelevant issue in respect of Mullah Ali Qari's reference bearing on the tradition لا نبی بعدی. Only an unreasonable person would trot out such an irrevelant point. As we have already clearly pointed out in our discussion of Mullah Ali Qari's reference, we are not concerned here with the personal belief of Imam Sherani about the appearance of a prophet. The subject under discussion is the interpretation of the tradition لا نبی بعدی as put forth by Imam Sherani and this interpretation undoubtedly takes congnizance of the only fact that there is no law-giving prophet after him. Therefore it is imperative that you should be actuated by a God-fearing sense of honesty and abstain from confusing the issue. For, we are not concerned here with the beliefs of Imam Sherani. The subject under discussion is limited only to the construction he put upon the taadition لا نبی بعدی.

It is evident from his above quoted reference that his interpretation conveys the one and only meaning, namely that there is no law-giving prophet after the Holy Prophet.

If however (I am qualifying this statement with a big 'If') Imam Sherani held the personal belief that a Prophet invariably brought a new law, his view is in no way a correct one. For, says the Quran, "And verily we gave Moses the Book and followed him up with Prophets" and again "we granted the Torahtherein was guidance and light, thereby the Prophets

who conformed thereto, did adjudicate for the Jews". This is too clear and evident a verse to admit of any doubt. Many other verses of the Quran further confirm this and so do the traditions. As, for instance, a tradition states that there have been 1,24,000 prophets of whom 315 were lawgivers (Musannad Ahmad). Factual evidence furnishes further confirmation. In history we find a large number of Prophets without a new law: they were appointed to serve the preceding law and reform the faith and practice of the people. Such prophets were David, Solomon, Zakaria and Yahya who were commissioned after Moses. Even commonsense would confirm this view, since, after all the Divine object in raising prophets, is public reformation which is sought through either a new law, or throngh regeneration of a previous law. In face of this conclusive evidence which has the cumulative support of Quran, tradition, history and reason, it is unthinkable that Imam Sherani or any other responsible authority could entertain the belief that all prophets must necessarily bring a new law. It is however probable that, in coincidence with our own terminology enunciated in the foregoing pages, the Imam Sahib shared the belief that in reality original prophethood comprised only the law-giving content, as truly, every prophetic dispensation originates with it and other categories of prophethood flow therefrom and follow it and not that other categories of prophethood are not entitled to be termed as prophethood in any sense of the word. In short, the tradition (لا نبی بعدی) "There is no prophet after me" is authentic and we accept it whole-heartedy. But it does not finally bolt the door of Prophethood after the Holy Prophet. On the contrary it simply means that since the Holy Prophet's term extends to the Day of Judgement, therefore there shall not appear a prophet who will abrogate his law or who may not be from among his following : only such a prophet shall henceforth appear as comes through the way kept open by the verse خاتم النبیین, (according to the view of the lady of Paradise our mother Hazrat Ayesha, May Allah be pleased with her) i.e. a disciple and a reflector-prophet who, bearing the seal of the Holy Prophet, attains to prophethood. The other

tradition that our opponents advance is the one based on the saying of Holy Prophet انی آخرالانبیاء "(I am the last of the Prophets)". This tradition is cited as the Holy Prophet's personal decision that he is the last Prophet and that after his judgement, the matter must be treated as closed. In this connection it must be borne in mind that as, we believe that there is no Prophet after the Holy Prophet's term of prophethood, similarly do we whole-heartedly subscribe our faith to the belief that he is in the true sense of the word the last Prophet. It is indeed very painful to note that our opponents, at times without caring to understand our view point and at others unfortunately, deliberately attribute to us the totally erroneous view that we do not accept the Holy Prophet as the final Prophet. The truth of the matter is that we do believe the Holy Prophet to be the last Prophet in the sense in which he has so declared himself to be.

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This misunderstanding has originated, in fact, with the failure on the part of our opponents, to ponder over the nature of prophethood we claim for the Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement. The mere word 'Prophet' used in respect of his claim, causes such an uproar that a hue and cry is raised. "Lo' here the prophet's seal has been voilated, another one has been assigned the place of the prophet and declared to be the last of the line". Would that our misguided friends gave a moment's cool and patient consideration and try to uuderstand the question in a dispassionate manner. What is prophethood? Which stream has the Holy prophet stopped and which one has he caused to flow? To refresh the memory of our readers, I will here like to repeat that according to the Holy Quran, the traditions and history, prophethood is divided into three categories:

(1) Law-bearing Prophethood which initiates a new law and a new prophetic dispensation. Instances in point are the prophethood of Hazrat Moses which brought the law of Torah and the perfect and mature prophethood of our Lord the Holy Prophet (peace of Allah and his blessings be on him) who was graced with the ever-lasting code of the Quran. Such prophethood is both law-giving as well as independent; law-giving in the sense that it bears a new code of laws and independent in the sense that it is granted directly without allegiance or obedience to a preceding prophet and therefore it is occasionally termed as "original Prophethood".

(2) Non-law-giving independent prophethood which is unaccompanied by a new law and is granted by heaven directly, without allegiance or obedience to a preceding Prophet and is therefore termed "independent Prophethood" as, such Prophethood is not sustained by a preceding prophethood but stands on its own feet. Instances in point are the prophethood of David, Solomon, Yahya and Christ. These snblime prophets were no doubt subject to the law of Moses, but they were not graced with Prophethood because of following Moses: they were favoured independently and directly and were only subsequently charged with serving the Mosaic code.

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(3) Non-law-bearing and non-independent Prophethood which, in other words, called reflex-Prophethood, such prophethood neither bears a new law nor is granted independent of allegiance to a preceding law-giving prophethood. It is, in fact, granted only through allegiance and in subservience to a preceding prophet and through his grace as a refiex-beneficence. Since shadow is, in a sense, reflex-action of the original, such prophethood is in fact a part of the original (preceding prophet' prophethood) and not something apart. Such prophethood has started with the advent of our Holy Prophet, for no prophet before him attained that height nor any previous law such point of perfection, as allegiance and subservience thereto could qualify a follower for the grace of Prophetic gift.

In the light of the foregoing exposition, it will be clear that in so far as the two categories of Prophethood and independent prophethood are concerned, the Holy Prophet is clearly the most outstanding and thus the Final Prophet. For, here both the parties are agreed that nor there shall be a law-bearing prophet after the Holy Prophet nor one attaining to Prophethood independanly and without the obligation to owe allegiance to him. In these respects the Holy Prophet is evidently the Final Prophet. In so far as the third category of prophethood (reflex-prophethood) is concerned, after little reflection, it will be clear to everybody that in this respect too the Holy Prophet alone remains the Final Prophet, as one who is favoured Prophethood through allegiance to him and

through the grace of his Prophethood, is but his own offshoot and part of him and not a foreign element; his person is but a mirror which like the full moon radiates only the light of the sun and no more. Thus in this respect too, the Holy Prophet, to all intents and purposes, shall be called the last Prophet and not the other one who radiates his light, for the latter is but a mirror or a shadow and not the original.

A parable may well illustrate the point. A man planted an orchrad wherein he raised a large variety of trees and as a finishing touch planted the last tree which was best in quality, in beauty, in stature and in yield and in lusciousness of fruit. After a period of time, from the root of this last tree sprang forth an offshoot, which formed but part of the main tree and was an offspring. Will this last tree then cease to be the last because of this offshoot? Not so; on the contrary the original tree remains the last tree, inspite of the offshoot, which forms only a part of the original tree and draws its sustenance from it. I am sure if our opponents were to reflect a little, they will readily appreciate this distinction and this question, which has become a puzzle, shall emerge clear like daylight before us, presenting no problem whatever.

(To be Continued)

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